

The Baltic Question

AN APPEAL TO THE CONSCIENCE OF THE UNITED NATIONS

World War II ended twenty years ago and peace-loving nations joined in a quest for a permanent international organization to promote self-determination and freedom among all nations. This summer the representatives of many countries met at San Francisco to observe the twentieth anniversary of the United Nations.

During its short history, the United Nations has expanded from 51 to the present 117 member nations. Many of the newest nations have only recently been freed from their status as colonies and welcomed as fully independent member nations. Ironically, as Western colonialism is ceasing to exist, colonialism under the guise of Communism has expanded ruthlessly.

THE BALTIC NATIONS OF ESTONIA, LATVIA AND LITHUANIA were member states of the League of Nations. These countries (four times the area of Denmark and roughly equivalent in population to Ireland, Israel and Sicily) were accorded full international recognition and diplomatic representation. During their independence these countries were prosperous and progressive members of the world community of nations.

In December, 1917, the Soviet Commissar of Foreign Affairs had said that "To demand self-determination for people in the territories of enemy countries and deny self-determination to the people within one's own country and colonies would be the most undisguised, the most cynical kind of imperialism."

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recognition to the independent Baltic States. Soviet Russia, in treaties with the three Baltic States, "recognized without any reserve the sovereignty and independence of Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania with all juridical consequences resulting from such recognition, and voluntarily and forever renounced all sovereign rights possessed by Russia." (Peace Treaty 1920, Article I).

The Baltic States enjoyed full sovereignty and independence only until the conclusion of the Molotov-Ribbentrop Pact of Non-Aggression between Soviet Russia and Nazi Germany on August 23rd, 1939. According to a secret protocol of the Pact, Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania were given over to the Soviet "sphere of influence."

While the attention of the world was absorbed in the struggles of World War II, the Soviet Union enforced its "sphere of influence." In June, 1940, troops and tanks of the Red Army poured into Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania. Moscow hastily set up "liberation" governments. A single list of representatives, hand-picked by the Communists, was proposed to the "liberated" countries. To insure the election of the Communist candidates, tens of thousands of people were arrested on the eve of the "elections" as a threat to those who might protest by their refusal to vote. The decisions of the "elected representatives" to "request" incorporation of the three Baltic States into the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics were prepared in Moscow and carried out by the occupying Red Army.

The evidence is overwhelming and conclusive that Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania were forcibly occupied and illegally annexed by the U.S.S.R. Any claims by the U.S.S.R. that the elections conducted in July 1940 were free and voluntary, or that the resolutions adopted by the resulting parliament petitioning for recognition as Soviet Republics were legal, are false and without foundation in fact.

Report of the Select Committee to Investigate Communist Aggression and the Forced Incorporation of the Baltic States into the U.S.S.R., House of Representatives, United States Congress, 1954.

The forceful annexation of the Baltic States violated every basic principle of trust among nations. The words of Winston S. Churchill cannot continue to be ignored:

We have never recognized the 1941 frontiers of Russia . . . They were acquired by acts of aggression and shameful collusion with Hitler. The transfer of the people of the Baltic States to Soviet Russia against their will would be contrary to all of the principles for which we are fighting this war and would dishonor our cause . . . The Baltic States should be sovereign, independent peoples.

President Dwight D. Eisenhower stated the American position clearly:

The Soviet Union, in violation of solemn treaty agreement, seized control of the Baltic Republics of Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania, and then, after having illegally incorporated these countries into the Soviet Union, proceeded to deport and liquidate great numbers of their citizens. These wrongs of aggression and terror have left a profound impression on the American people. It is reflected in our steadfast policy of continuing to recognize the diplomatic representatives of the independent Baltic States and in our cherished hope that these countries shall again live in freedom.

Recognizing the injustice remaining as an aftermath of the Second World War, President John F. Kennedy stated:

All of us . . . must be faithful to our conviction that peace in Europe can never be complete until everywhere in Europe men can choose, in peace and freedom, how their countries shall be governed.

The unchallenged annexation of small nations can only encourage further attempts at imperialism. History has adequately provided lessons showing that a policy of acquiescence can only buy temporary peace at an exorbitant price. We do not believe that the United Nations is ready to pay the price of unquestioning subservience which Soviet Communist expansion demands.

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AN APPEAL TO THE MEMBER STATES OF THE UNITED NATIONS

We appeal to the conscience of the member states of the United Nations Organization to schedule, for discussion in the General Assembly, the Baltic Question. We deny that the forced annexation of the Baltic States is an internal affair of the U.S.S.R.

We appeal to the United Nations "Committee of 24 to Investigate Colonialism" to schedule for discussion and action the incessant Russification of Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania. The Baltic States have a right to preserve their own languages, customs and traditions which are separate and distinct from those of Russia. Soviet colonization has imposed tens of thousands of foreign settlers to erase all traces of indigenous civilization in the Baltics, and to assimilate the people into an alien Russian culture.

We appeal to the United Nations to undertake the restoration of full independence to Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania.

Our appeals are made in the spirit of the United Nations Charter which states:

To reaffirm faith in fundamental human rights, in the dignity and worth of the human person, in the equal rights of men and women and of nations large and small...

(Charter of the United Nations, Preamble)

All Members shall refrain in their international relations from the threat or use of force against the territorial integrity or political independence of any state, or in any other manner inconsistent with the Purposes of the United Nations.

(Chapter II, Article IV)

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A mass rally will be held at noon, Saturday, November 13th at Madison Square Garden, New York, to appeal to the United Nations to take up the Baltic Question. The demonstration will conclude at Dag Hammarskjold Plaza with an appeal for action. The public is cordially invited.



I approve of your appeal to the United Nations urging that the question of the Baltic States be placed on the agenda of the United Nations. I am also interested in your booklet THE BALTIC COUNTRIES.

Enclosed is \$_____ to help defray the expense of this appeal.

NAME _____

ADDRESS _____

Please make your contribution to:

Committee to Restore Lithuania's Independence

29 West 57th Street, 10th Floor, New York, New York 10019

COMMITTEE TO RESTORE LITHUANIA'S INDEPENDENCE

Executive Coordinators: Rt. Rev. Msgr. John Balkunas, Algirdas Budreckis,

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